DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 317 240 JC 900 190

AUTHOR Conlin, Stephen
TITLE Percentage of S.C.C. Students Bypassing Remedial Work and the Effects on Subsequent Grades and Dropout Rate.
INSTITUTION Southwestern Community Coll., Sylva, NC.
PUB DATE 25 Oct 89
NOTE 25p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Statistical Data (110)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; College Preparation; *Community Colleges; *Course Selection (Students); *Dropout Rate; Grades (Scholastic); High Risk Students; Remedial Mathematics; Remedial Reading; Screening Tests; *Student Placement; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

In 1989, a study was conducted at Southwestern Community College (SCC) to determine the percentage of students who by-passed the remedial classes into which they had been placed, and the effect of this on their progress at SCC. A random sample of 180 students who failed all or part of the placement test administered in 1988-89 were chosen as the study group. Study findings included the following: (1) at least 30% of the students did not register for remedial courses or registered for the incorrect course; (2) by-passing remedial classes seemed to have a negative effect on students' grade point averages, dropout rates, and performance in subsequent math and English classes; (3) mathematics classes were the most frequently by-passed remedial classes; (4) by-passing math classes seemed to have a devastating effect on later attempts to pass curriculum-level math, with 90% of those students skipping remedial math either failing or withdrawing from attempted math courses; (5) a clear relationship existed between the probability of dropping out and placing into extremely low-level English grammar, reading, or math courses; and (6) the dropout rate of students needing four or more remedial classes was not significantly higher than the rate for students needing only one remedial class. An appended report describes common problems in registering students for pre-curriculum classes. (JMC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED317240

PERCENTAGE OF S.C.C. STUDENTS BYPASSING REMEDIAL WORK AND THE EFFECTS ON SUBSEQUENT GRADES AND DROPOUT RATE.

STEPHEN CONLIN

ASSISTANT DEAN INSTITUTIONAL STUDIES
SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SYLVA, NORTH CAROLINA

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Conlin

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

JC 900 190

Office of Institutional Studies
October 25, 1989

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WHAT PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS TESTING INTO REMEDIAL LEVELS ACTUALLY GET REGISTERED FOR SUCH CLASSES? WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE STUDENTS WHO BY-PASS REMEDIAL WORK?

PURPOSE:

Various forms of placement testing have existed at Southwestern Community College since its inception. In more recent years, the A.P.S. for Community Colleges, published by the College Board, has been the achievement test battery utilized to determine the remedial needs of incoming students. It is also used as an admissions test for Allied Health Students who must pass all sections of the test before admission into their major.

Several years ago the College Board of Trustees approved a policy which held that once a student had tested into remedial levels, he must take the prescribed course work. Currently, test results and prescribed classes are communicated to student advisors. They are responsible for registering students into the correct remedial classes.

In the years since the passage of this policy, cases have emerged where students were not being placed into this required remedial work. **It was the purpose of this study to determine what percentage of students typically by-passed remedial classes and what effect this had upon their progress at Southwestern Community College.**

LIMITATIONS:

A random selection of 180 students who failed all or part of the 1988-89 placement test were chosen as the study group. All of these students should have been required to take remedial course work. No Allied Health Students were included in the study because they are not required to

take remedial work when they fail the test. (They must, instead, continue taking the test until they pass all sections in order to be admitted into their Allied Health Program.) Cases where noncompliance with remedial course requirements were considered unavoidable were not counted as registration errors (i.e., student dropped out before remaining remedial classes could be taken, etc.).

OBSERVATIONS:

1) The rate of non-registration or incorrect registration for the 180 students being studied was at least 30 percent. (See chart # 1.) Errors ranged from simple failure to place students into one or more remedial classes, to putting a special education student who needed the full range of very basic remedial classes into 16 hours of curriculum courses without benefit of a placement test. Some speculation as to why these misregistrations occurred is published in the appendix under "Common Problems Registering Students for Pre-Curriculum Classes". A complete case log is also contained in the appendix.

2) By-passing remedial classes seems to impact negatively on total Q.P.R., dropout rate, and performance in subsequent math and English classes. (See charts 2, 3, and 4.) The greatest negative impact seems to be on total Q.P.R. and on mathematics classes.

3) By-passing remedial math classes seems to have a devastating effect on later attempts to pass curriculum level math. (See chart 3.) Ninety percent of those students skipping remedial math either failed (70%) or withdrew (20%) from their curriculum level math.

4) The relationship between by-passing remedial reading and grammar

and subsequent performance in curriculum English does not seem as clear as it does with mathematics. (See chart 6.)

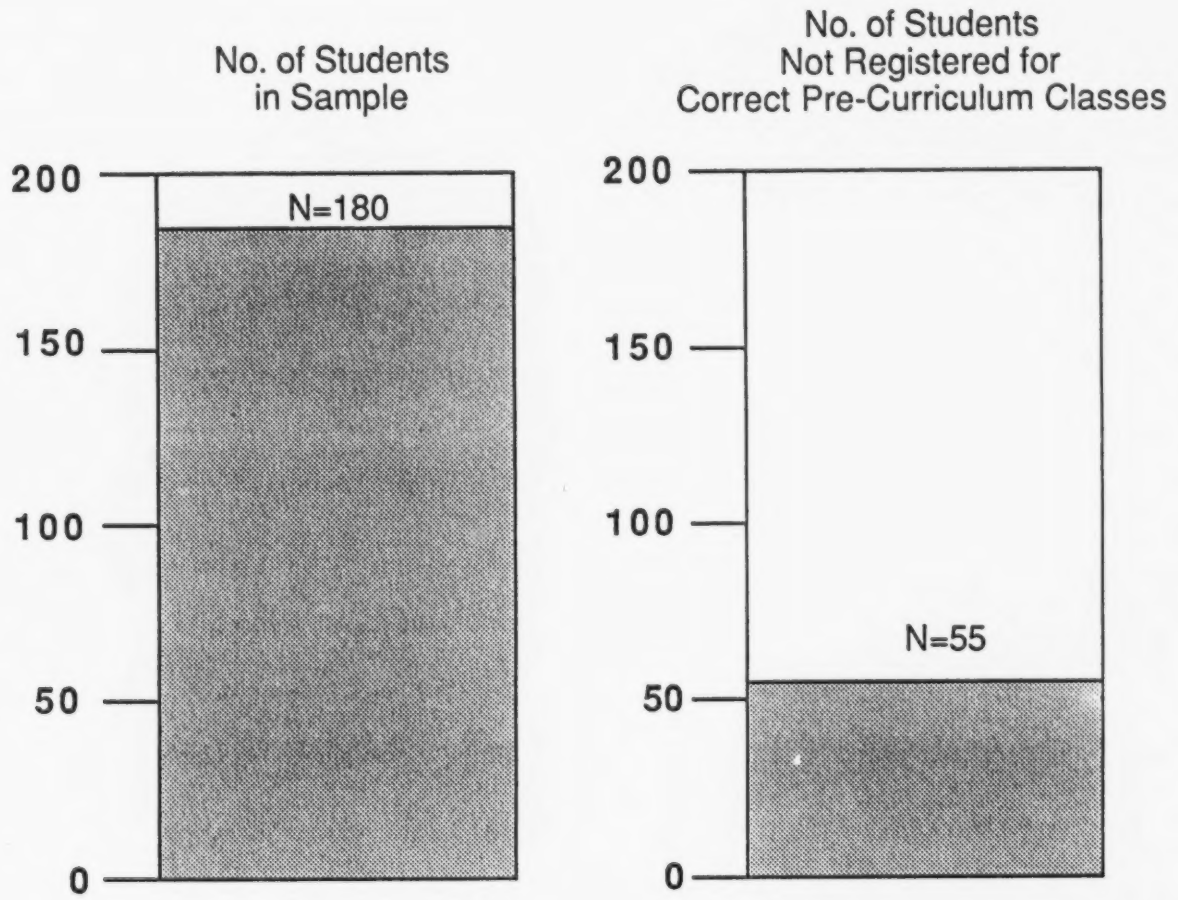
5) There seems to be a clear relationship, however, between placing into extremely low level English grammar, (Eng 080); reading (DVS 070) or math (080) and the student's probability of becoming a dropout. (See chart 7.) The dropout rate for students needing four or more remedial classes is not much higher than the rate for students needing only one remedial class. Both groups exceed the dropout rate of the general SCC population. (See charts 7 and 8.)

6) The most frequently by-passed remedial class is in mathematics. This also has the greatest negative impact on subsequent classes. (See charts 9 and 3.)

RESULTS:

The following charts portray the results of this study:

NON-REGISTRATION FOR REQUIRED PRE-CURRICULUM CLASSES

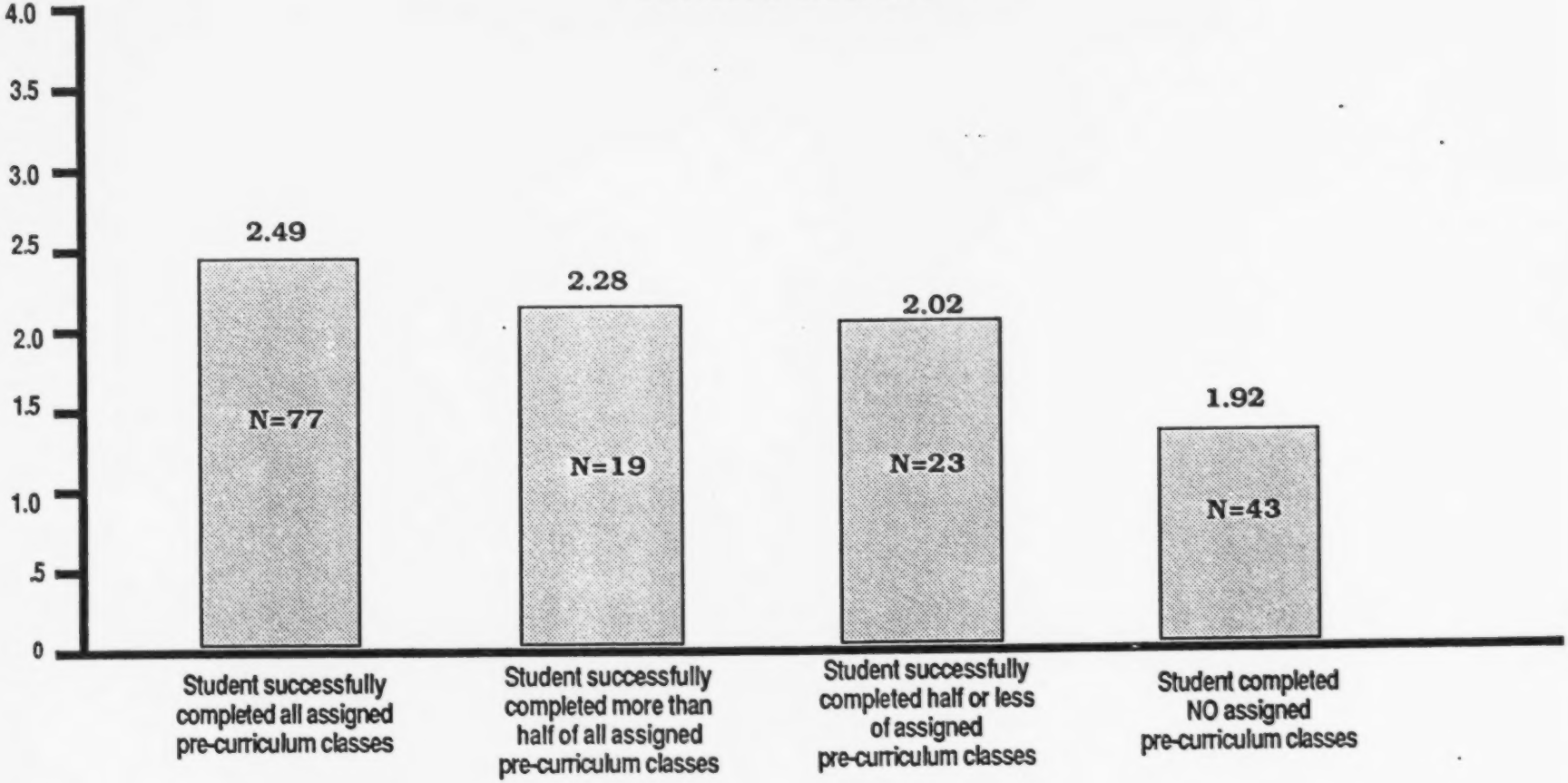


*** Rate of non-registration or incorrect registration in pre-curriculum classes**
30%

* (60% received some of the pre-curriculum classes they were supposed to get - 40% received none of the pre-curriculum classes they were supposed to get.)

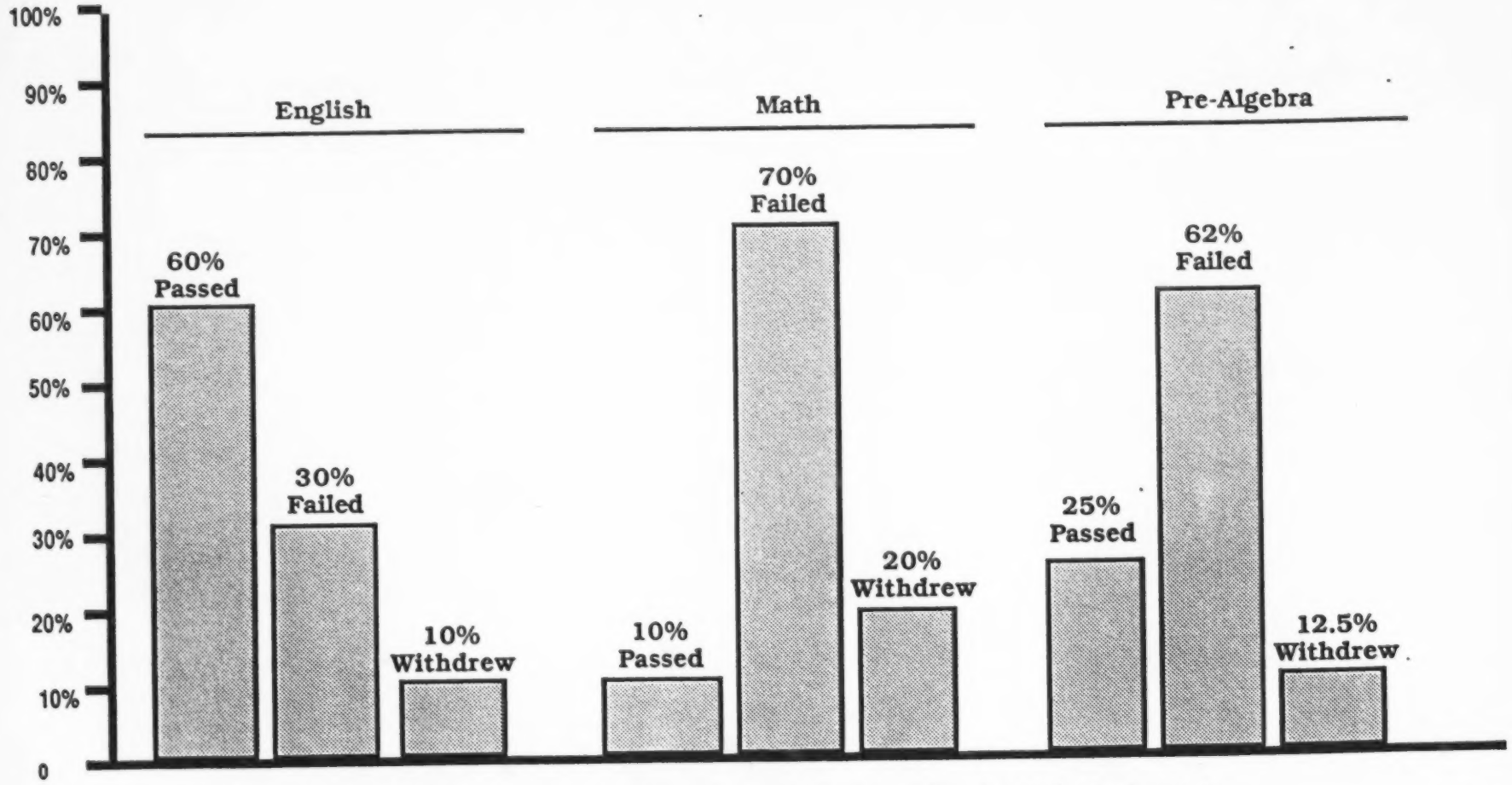
1

Average Q.P.R. for Students Taking Various Levels of Remediation*



* 18 students withdrew from all classes before the end of their first quarter

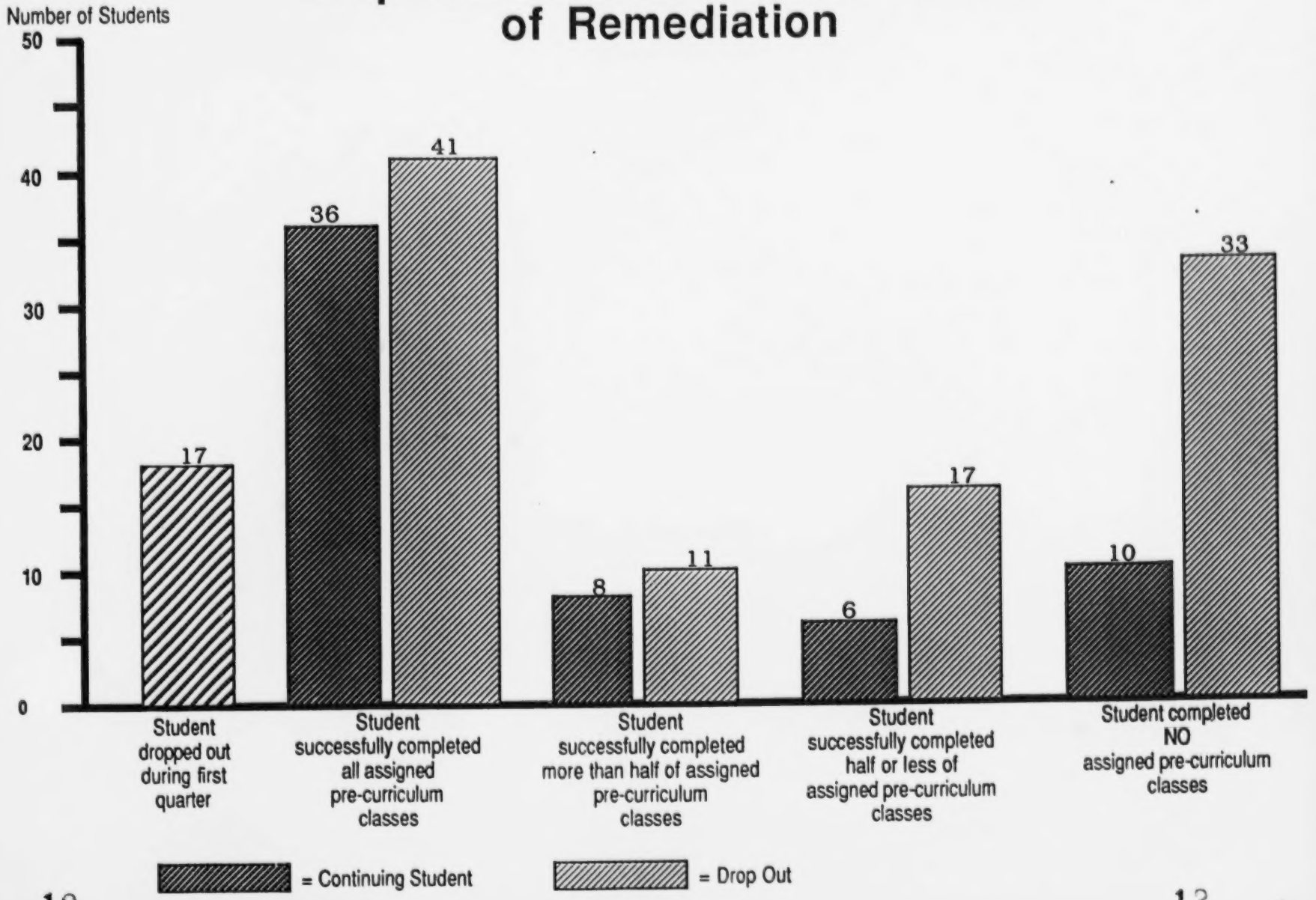
PASS RATE IN RELATED CURRICULUM CLASSES AFTER BY-PASSING REMEDIATION (N=55)



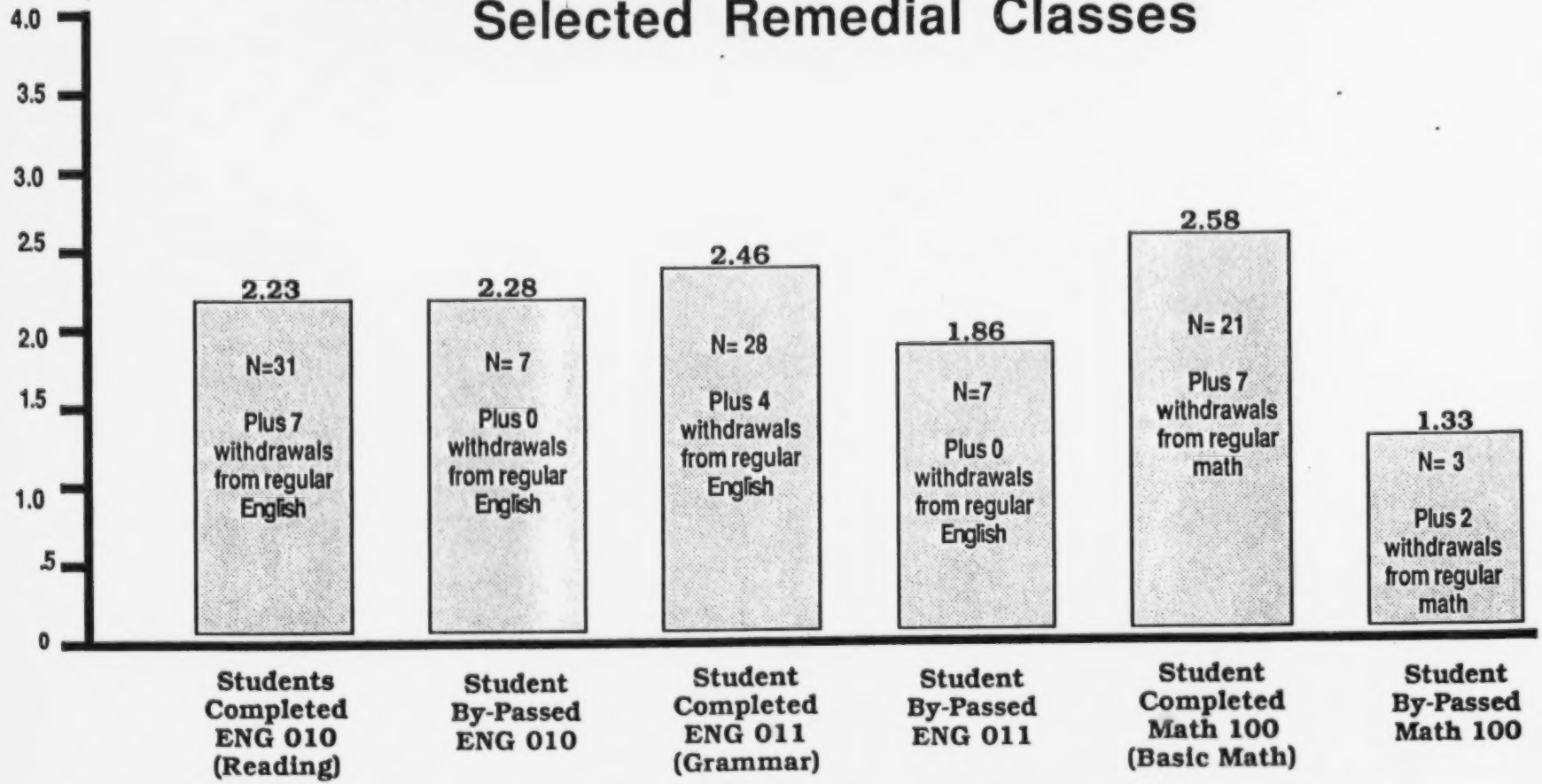
After students by-passed remedial work, how did they fare in their first regular curriculum course related to the remedial work they did not receive?

3

Drop Out Rate for Various Levels of Remediation

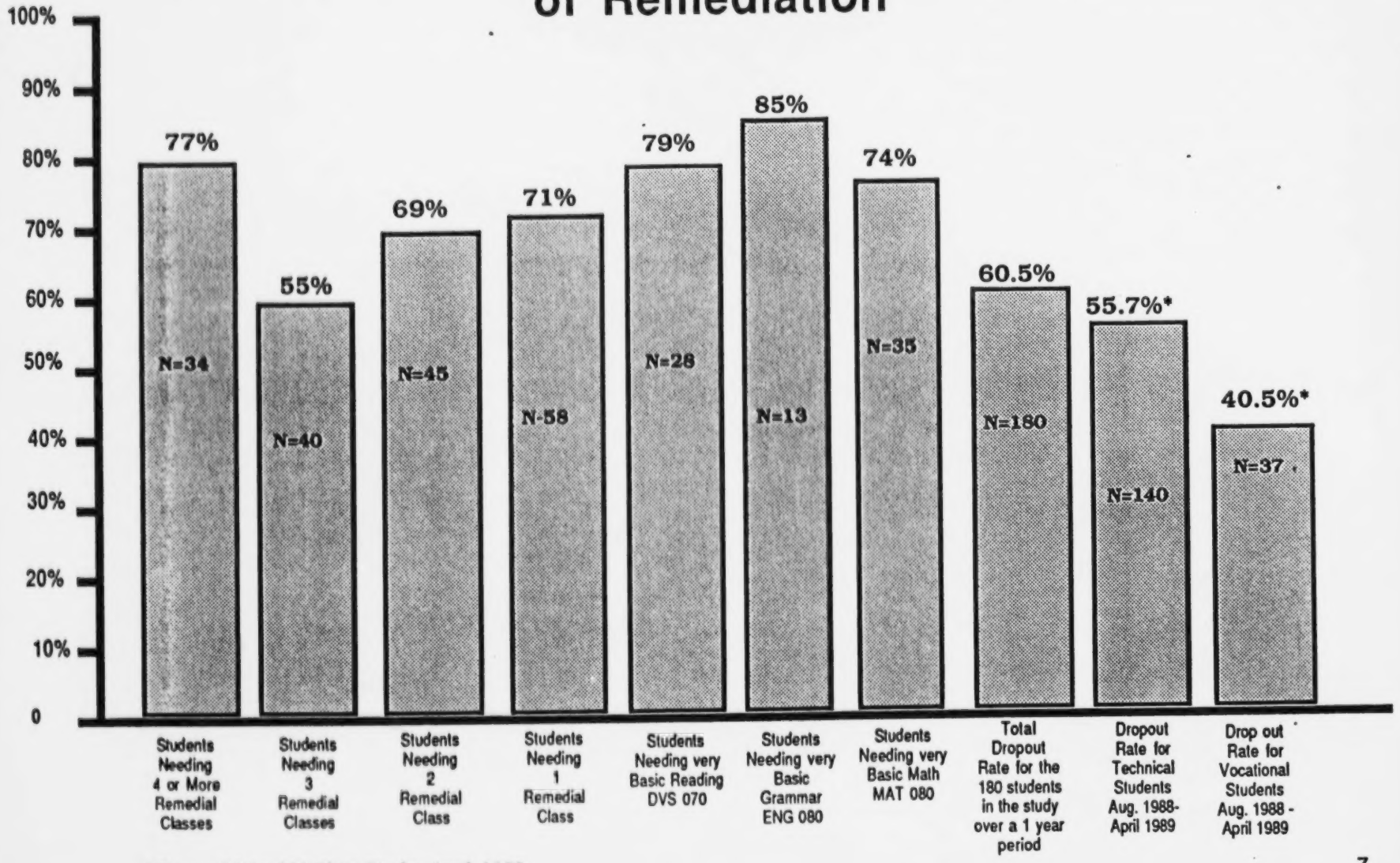


Average Grade Received in First Regular English or Math Class After Placing into Selected Remedial Classes



6

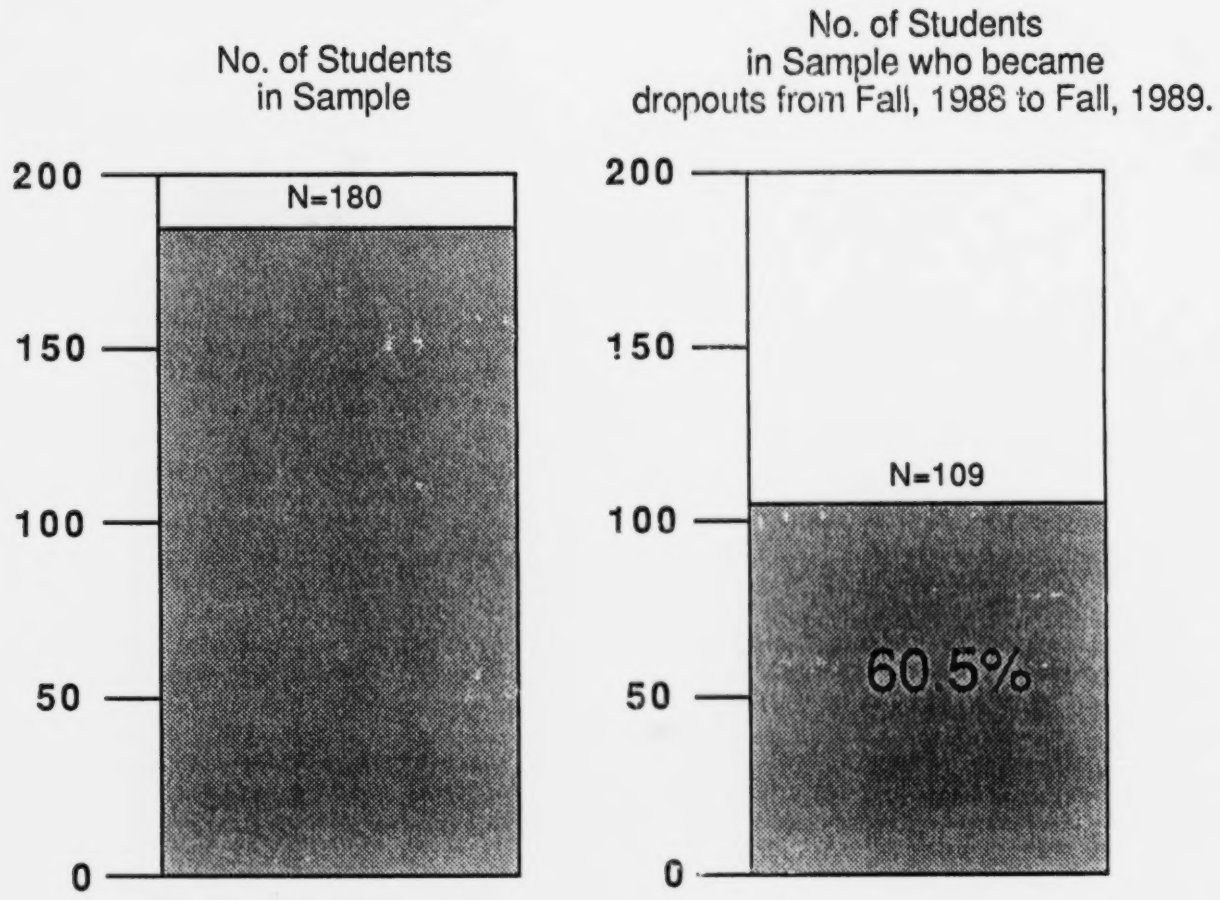
Drop Out Rate for Students Needing Various Levels of Remediation



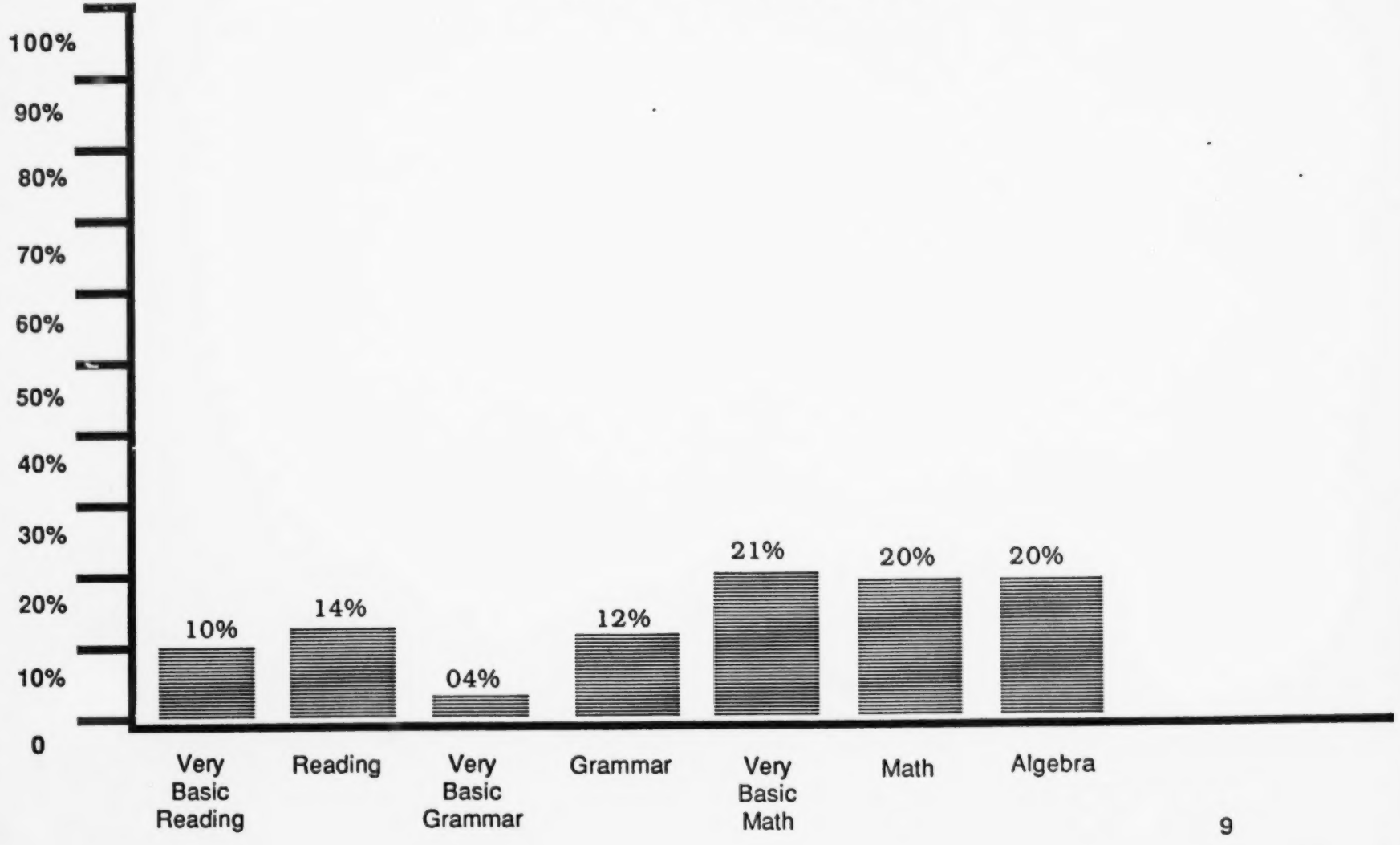
* Figure obtained McClure Study , April, 1989

7

DROP OUT RATE FOR STUDY GROUP



TYPE OF PRE-CURRICULUM CLASS BY-PASSED BY STUDENTS



RECOMMENDATIONS:

1) Move immediately to a computer verification system during registration that will ensure that students are placed into the correct remedial courses. (This proposal is being discussed in detail by the task force examining our placement test procedures.)

2) Meet with advisors to discuss the study and emphasize that: a) it is extremely important to register students for all of their remedial work first quarter and; b) this is being monitored. Remedial classes must take priority over curriculum work. An appeal procedure for students should be available.

3) All advisors must become computer literate enough to check a student's test record and transcript on the Prime.

4) Advisors who absolutely will not cooperate should be eliminated as advisors.

5) No one other than the student's advisor should sign registrations, drops or withdrawals. One exception would be someone designated by the Executive Dean for Academic Affairs. This designee should have at least as much training as the advisors.

6) A detailed, comprehensive policy on placement testing should be drawn up for Board of Trustees approval and inclusion in the Policies and Administrative Procedures Handbook.

7) A pamphlet discussing placement testing and remedial programs should be created. This should be distributed to students, staff, feeder schools and agencies, etc.

8) Any transcription errors or discrepancies found in test records should be reported to the Dean of Student Personnel Services immediately.

9) The Student Success Center must develop a tracking system which ensures that students get into the correct remedial classes initially. This system must also ensure that students repeat failed remedial classes and take the next sequential remedial class when several levels of remediation are necessary. They must be given the necessary information and authority to carry out this responsibility.

10) Counseling should begin to utilize the column on the Student Master File Test Record which allows tracking of subsequent student performance in curriculum English and math. This is a measure of the predictive validity of the placement test as well as the effectiveness of our remedial programs.

11) Greater care must be taken when students change majors and particularly when they change from vocational to technical or from allied health to technical. The original remedial requirements and test records need to be changed in these cases.

12) A study of the effectiveness of Student Success Center classes must be conducted.

13) An early warning system can be developed using the placement test as one of the elements for predicting "high probability dropouts".

APPENDIX

8/2/89

COMMON PROBLEMS REGISTERING STUDENTS FOR PRE-CURRICULUM CLASSES

1. SIMPLY DID NOT REGISTER STUDENT FOR THE CLASS (MOST COMMON).

   - BECAUSE IT CONFLICTED WITH A CURRICULUM COURSE?
   - BECAUSE STUDENT OBJECTED?
   - BECAUSE ADVISOR DIDN'T HAVE THE NECESSARY RECORDS WITH HIM TO DETERMINE THE NEED?
   - BECAUSE ADVISOR DIDN'T RECEIVE THE PERMIT TO REGISTER NOR THE XEROX COPY OF THE STUDENT'S TEST AND COULDN'T USE THE COMPUTER TO HELP?
   - BECAUSE DIFFERENT PROPLE OCCASIONALLY SIGN FOR THE ADVISOR (RANGING FROM SECRETARIES TO DEANS).
   - TRANSCRIPTION OR SCORING ERRORS MADE IN STUDENT SERVICES?

2. PLACED IN A REGULAR CURRICULUM ENGLISH OR MATH INSTEAD OF PRE-CURRICULUM CLASSES (VERY COMMON).

   - ALL REASONS LISTED UNDER #1.
   - THE BELIEF THAT THE STUDENT WAS REALLY BETTER THAN THE TEST INDICATED?
   - THE PRESSURE OF MASS REGISTRATION?
   - STUDENT CHANGED REGISTRATION BETWEEN ADVISOR'S TABLE AND THE COMPUTER HAS (NO REAL EVIDENCE OF THIS).

3. PLACED IN MATH OR ENGLISH WITHOUT A PLACEMENT TEST (FAIRLY COMMON).

   - STUDENT TOOK THE PLACEMENT TEST WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE ALGEBRA SUBTEST (PLACED INTO ALGEBRA ANYWAY).
   - STUDENT TOOK ONLY THE ENGLISH SECTIONS OF THE TEST BUT NOT MATH COMPUTATION (PLACED IN MATH ANYWAY).
   - STUDENT HAD NOT TAKEN ANY OF THE PLACEMENT TEST (PLACED IN MATH OR ENGLISH ANYWAY). NOT COMMON.

4. DELAYED TAKING PRE-CURRICULUM COURSES UNTIL LATER QUARTERS (NOT COMMON).

5. MISREGISTERED FOR INCORRECT REMEDIAL CLASS (NOT COMMON). PUT INTO REMEDIAL CLASSES UNNECESSARILY.

6. TOOK REGULAR CURRICULUM MATH (MATH 105) BEFORE GOING BACK THE FOLLOWING QUARTER TO TAKE MATH 103. MOST OFTEN RESULTED IN AN "F" IN MATH 105 (NOT COMMON).

7. FAILED TO REPEAT A PRE-CURRICULUM CLASS AFTER RECEIVING AN "R", "F" OR "W". (NOT COMMON WHEN STUDENTS CONTINUED).

8. FAILED TO FOLLOW LOWEST LEVEL PRE-CURRICULUM COURSES WITH THE NEXT SEQUENTIAL PRE-CURRICULUM COURSE e.g. DVS 081 -- ENGLISH 101.

ERIC Clearinghouse for
Junior Colleges
MAY 1 1 1990